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CHEMIST & DRUGGIST

The newsweekly for pharmacy

August 17, 1991



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TO STOCK UP ON ROBINSONS



AND HERE ARE 3 MORE

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THE TASTE OF SUCCESS

**Script pick
up policy
unchanged**

**Three cleared
of CD conspiracy
charges**

**Numark launch
marketing guide**

**Llandyssul
leaflet sparks
doctors' protest**

**Illegal drug
sales lead to
striking off**

**Research digest:
insulin dose in
im injection**

**Points of law —
looking at PAYE**

**Eight new shops
for Unichem**



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RECKITT COLMAN
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Published Saturdays by Benn Publications Ltd. (member, United Newspapers Group) Sovereign Way, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1RW
Telephone: 0732 364422
Telex: 95132 Benton G
Facsimile: 0732 361534
Regional Advertisement Offices:
Manchester (Midland & North):
Area Manager: Brian Carter (061-881 0112)

Subscriptions: Home £90 per annum. Overseas & Eire £125 per annum including postage. £1.85 per copy (postage extra).



Member of the Audit
Bureau of Circulations

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Comment

This week Numark have added to the range of services available to members. Their working guide for pharmacy gives both background and detailed information on pharmacy markets, as well as advice on front-of-counter layout and merchandising. Numark are also providing advice on dispensary and counselling area design. In so doing they have joined the other two major players in the wholesale market, Unichem and AAH, who have been providing similar services for some time. It is good to see the Numark organisation, under Terry Norris' leadership, and with the guidance of the Retail Advisory Board, once again become a significant force in pharmaceutical wholesaling. Pharmacists can only benefit from being able to choose from a number of vigorous and viable major wholesale groups. Nor must regional wholesalers be discounted: their more personal and more modest range of services have a definite place in the pharmaceutical repertoire.

If pharmacists want to purchase a business, then finance can be arranged, although a significant percentage of their business may be tied to the wholesaler provider. If they want to franchise, then AAH and Unichem have schemes. Owners of existing businesses can take advantage of the co-ordinated promotional packages available, some expressly linked to the trading image of the voluntary trading group with co-operative

advertising, other deals merely standing on their own merit. Pharmacy design packages are on offer along with computer systems of varying sophistication for both dispensary and front shop. And then there is advice from executives and fellow pharmacists on regional panels and advisory boards.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Independent pharmacists also have the support of the National Pharmaceutical Association which provides a comprehensive package of business services and equipment, along with business and third party insurance and legal advice.

All this cumulative expertise is having an effect. Pharmacists were once regarded by many manufacturers as relatively poor retailers when compared with competing grocers. While this accusation is still occasionally heard, by and large pharmacists are acknowledged to be doing a more professional sales job. And wholesalers, particularly the more aggressive, are purchasing and selling on at increasingly keen prices. Additionally the continual promotion of pharmacists by the NPA as the High Street health experts is bearing fruit. And with the working party on the future of community pharmacy still to report, the future of the profession — notwithstanding the various Boots initiatives — is set fair in its 150th anniversary year.

No change on collection delivery policy, says Society

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Council decided last week not to change its policy on the advertising of collection and delivery services, despite the Pharmaceutical General Council (Scotland)'s view that advertising is outside the terms of service for contractors in Scotland.

Council also agreed to make a further approach to the PGC and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee about the advisability of looking again at collective advertising of such services in doctors' surgeries on behalf of all contractors in an area. This suggestion had first been made

in 1990 when part of the Code of Ethics on advertising professional services was being revised.

Council also decided to reverse its objection to the use of stamped addressed envelopes and not to object to a Freepost service for prescription collection and delivery. The Ethics Committee thought it was inappropriate to consider such facilities a form of inducement, when collection and delivery might save the patient several pounds in fares.

Finally, Council agreed not to object to the National Pharmaceutical Association's

proposed repeat prescription collection scheme. The Ethics Committee expressed one or two reservations, which would be conveyed to the NPA, about the style of illustrations used in promotional materials, but it recognised that standards of such promotions were changing rapidly and the material was addressed to the general public who might not be as sensitive to such matters as pharmacists. The Committee noted that the NPA scheme was similar to the Boots scheme to which Council had decided not to object at its previous meeting.



Numark's new plan — see Business News p290

Dial your pharmacist?

American pharmacists who have difficulties finding sufficient time to counsel patients are being offered a service to set up telephone helplines with recorded messages.

The scheme is just one of many using taped messages on medicines and health topics or offering the services of a pharmacist to deal with queries, says *American Pharmacy* (August 1991).

Patients want to receive more information about their condition or medicines, but do not always learn everything they want to know from their pharmacist or physician, says the report.

The Health Information Network (HIN) offers 24-hour access to messages on more than 2,400 medications and 240 health topics. Pharmacists can subscribe to the system for \$1,000 for which they receive their own 900 phone number, relevant brochures, and patient information leaflets. The fee also covers the cost of programming the pharmacy's computer so each prescription label is printed with a four-digit code corresponding with the patients' medication.

"Patients receive important information and the pharmacy gets publicity and compensation. It's not a total answer to reimbursement for cognitive services but it's one way of addressing the issue," says product manager Randy Farmer.

Other variations on the theme include: Ask Your Pharmacist Inc which charges callers \$1.95 a minute to talk to qualified pharmacists, and whose 24 hour a day service is equipped with computers for quick reference.

In Boston, Medi-Message offers pre-recorded information on 250 drugs. The service is free to local callers. About 800-1,000 calls are received every month, mostly about hypertension or ulcer medications.

Number of premises up 23 in July

The number of premises on the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Register rose by 23 in July to 11,871, the highest figure since January 1988 when numbers were falling after the pre-new contract peak. Once again the numbers were boosted by the registration of more hospital pharmacies which has followed the loss of Crown immunity.

Most of the rise was accounted for by England, where there were 24 additions to the Register, including one restoration, and 2 deletions, while in London there were two additions and three deletions. In Scotland and Wales, the monthly overall change was identical, up one, with two additions and one deletion.

'Circulars as adverts' complaints held up

Complaints made two years ago that circular letters sent to residential homes appeared to contravene the NHS Regulations on pharmacy advertising have made little progress with FHSAs.

The Pharmaceutical General Council's letter to Scottish contractors (C&D) last week, p224 highlighted the apparent disparity between the Regulations and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Code of Ethics. This week (Letters, p288) two pharmacists, Fred Taylor and Allan Jones, explain that they complained in 1989 to their then family practitioner committees about circular letters sent out by Boots to residential homes offering controlled dosage systems. And the

National Pharmaceutical Association say it knows of two other pharmacists who made a similar attempt.

In Cheshire, the FPC decided, on receipt of Fred Taylor's complaint, that there was no case to answer, then decided Mr Taylor was not a competent complainant. Eventually, the FPC took up the complaint itself, referred it to neighbouring St Helens and Knowsley, who decided there was nothing to investigate. According to a Cheshire FHSA spokeswoman, the FHSA appealed against this decision to the Secretary of State and is waiting for a reply.

In Clwyd, Allan Jones's complaint was eventually taken on by the FPC

in the same way, but it appears to have made the unfortunate choice of Cheshire, itself one step further on in the same process, for an adjudication and has heard nothing since.

At the NPA, C&D's lead story and editorial last week prompted a record number of calls to the information department. Head of department Mary Allen said they took over 400 calls on Monday.

The NPA is explaining to pharmacists that there is an apparent disparity between the Code of Ethics and the NHS Regulations, but is saying it is up to pharmacists what they do about it. The Association is still waiting for the report of its legal adviser.

Gateshead response to Boots

Doctors in Gateshead are to be circulated with a summary of the Local Pharmaceutical Committee's views on the situation regarding the Boots repeat prescription plans.

The move follows a meeting involving LPC chairman Allen Tweedie, secretary Ian Mackey and Dr Chris Hole, secretary of the Local Medical Committee. The meeting was described as "most cordial and helpful".

Mr Tweedie has sent a draft letter to the LMC for comment. This tells doctors that the LPC views the Boots plans with mixed feelings "and some misgivings." The patient appears to be saved a journey but it would be a disadvantage if patients were deterred from seeing their doctors, leading them to "adopt a view that medication is simply a push-button exercise which requires less doctor contact and monitoring."

"It cannot be desirable either, that patients, their disabilities and the medical profession could be used to direct patient traffic flow into a particular pharmacy," says the letter.

For patients who are genuinely disadvantaged a private collection and delivery service could be arranged by all pharmacies.

In a letter to pharmacists, Mr Tweedie advises they visit local doctors to present the case to them and to maintain present arrangements wherever possible.

The meeting with the LMC also led to a suggestion that LPC officials could visit LMC meetings and exchange ideas or answer queries doctors have with regard to the current situation in the healthcare services under the new FHSA's.

New light on *H. pylori*

Further light has been shed on the role of the bacterium, *Helicobacter pylori*, in peptic ulceration.

Studies have shown that 70-100 per cent of patients with duodenal ulcers have gastric *H. pylori*, but not all develop ulcers.

Researchers in Leeds and Bradford now believe this may be because not all strains of *H. pylori* have the same capacity for damage. In a survey of 100 dyspeptic patients reported in *The Lancet* last week, they found that peptic ulceration was specifically associated with mucosal recognition of 120kDa protein, a surface protein not expressed in some *H. pylori* strains.

They suggest that 120kDa positive strains have pathogenic features associated with active gastritis and peptic ulceration. People who do not develop ulcers may be carrying negative strains.

Struck off for sales to addicts

A pharmacist who admitted selling various controlled, addictive drugs to addicts he knew would abuse them has had his name removed from the register.

Mr Foo Wah Yew of 31, St Lawrence Road, Upminster, Essex admitted selling the drugs from his pharmacy at 422 Kingsland Road, Hackney for two years to "keep his business going". They included codeine linctus, codeine phosphate tablets, ephedrine hydrochloride powder and elixir and Valium tablets.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Statutory Committee heard that the illicit sales amounted to £35,000, a third of Mr Yew's annual turnover. During the period January to November last year, only 100 prescriptions a month had been dispensed.

During a visit last November by George Norris, a Society inspector, Mr Yew admitted selling the drugs. Following this visit Mr Yew changed wholesalers and continued orders of the drugs, the Committee heard.

Giving evidence, Mr Yew said he

was subject to harassment and threats of arson without support from the Society or the police. "I was under threat by people coming to my premises, pulling out a knife and demanding medicines. There was a lot of pressure," he said. "My life was being threatened, my children were being threatened and my business was at stake." He refused to say whether he is still supplying the addicts.

The amount of ephedrine powder was described as "utterly incredible" by Committee chairman Gary Flather QC. The drug was sold with "monotonous regularity". A "colossal" amount of linctus — 2,000 litres in December — was also sold.

"We conclude illicit sales were vital to the continuance of the business. A professional man does

not act illegally, not secretly feeding drug addicts," said Mr Flather.

"We have no alternative than to direct his name should be removed from the Register. In light of the huge quantities and breach of promise it must be reasonable to expect Mr Yew will never be forgiven and may never practice again. No application for re-registration should be made until five years elapse," Mr Flather concluded. Mr Yew has the right of appeal within three months.

Alan Davidson, deputy head of the Society's Law Department, said the case had been referred to the Law Committee, who chose to refer it to the Statutory Committee to be dealt with immediately rather than in the courts. It is still open to the Law Committee to reverse that decision.

Response to Hillingdon pre-pay scheme is 'overwhelming'

Officials at Hillingdon Family Health Services Authority have been "overwhelmed" by the response from community pharmacists to a pilot scheme selling prescription pre-payment certificates.

Carol Edwards, administration manager at the FHSA, who wrote to all pharmacists in the area, told C&D she found the response even more surprising considering there was no financial incentive.

Initially, Ms Edwards planned to introduce the six-month scheme in eight or nine pharmacies around the borough. This may be altered to include more pharmacies if suitable banking arrangements could be arranged, she said.

The FHSA is to send 10 pre-payment forms to each of the participating pharmacies. The

pharmacist collects and banks the money and the FHSA keeps patient details on their computer so they can issue reminders when certificates are due for renewal.

If a patient from outside the FHSA area purchases a certificate, the FHSA will send a photocopy to the relevant Authority so they can issue reminders.

Further schemes currently being considered by Hillingdon FHSA include a pharmacy visiting scheme to "generally establish what is going on in the pharmacies". The FHSA believes it has a very good relationship with community pharmacists but wants to develop it along more personal lines.

The Authority is also looking at setting up a drug removal service, calling a couple of times a year to collect drugs returned by patients.

Discriminating against psoriasis?

A new survey into psoriasis has found that 4 per cent of sufferers refused employment because of their condition have been turned down by pharmacies.

The Psoriasis Association, funded by the Leo Foundation, explored the effect on patients' lifestyle, patients' attitudes to the disease and the understanding of the disease by the general public.

The survey found that 47 per cent of sufferers admit to lacking self confidence as a result of their condition, and 41 per cent feel their

GPs do not understand their condition.

Over a quarter of patients (27 per cent) are dissatisfied with the treatment they receive. They claim it is either ineffective, inconvenient, associated with undesirable side-effects, or all three.

An estimated 1.5 million people in the UK suffer from psoriasis. Leo's Dovonex ointment, containing vitamin D analogue calcipotriol, is a new treatment said to offer sufferers hope and a dramatically improved lifestyle.

Three cleared of CD production charges

The owners of a London pharmacy convicted of involvement in a conspiracy to produce millions of pounds worth of drugs were cleared and had their sentences set aside by the Appeal Court last Wednesday.

Chandrakant, Hasmukh and pharmacist Ashwin Patel were convicted in 1989 of conspiracy to manufacture amphetamine sulphate. But the Appeal Court ruled that the trial judge had failed to present the three men's defence properly.

The Patels, of the Plashet Pharmacy in Plashet Road, Plaistow, East London, had their convictions for conspiracy at Snaresbrook Crown Court in July 1989 quashed. Suspended prison sentences of one year for Chandrakant, one-and-a-half for Hasmukh and two years for Ashwin were set aside.

Lord Justice Woolf, sitting with Mr Justice Leonard and Mr Justice Hidden, went on to dismiss appeals by two alleged co-conspirators — Thomas Hole, of Defors Street, Canning Town, East London, and Raymond Lennie, of South Hanningfield, Essex. They had been convicted of conspiracy to supply as well as manufacture and received total sentences of 13 and five years respectively.

Lord Justice Woolf said it was not disputed that through an intermediary the conspirators were able to buy very substantial quantities of drug-making chemicals, including mannitol,

acetone and formamide, from the Patels.

Only Ashwin was a qualified pharmacist. Hasmukh was involved in paperwork and serving and Chandrakant worked at weekends and evenings. All said they did not think the chemicals were to be used for making illicit drugs. The issue at the trial as far as they were concerned was whether they were aware that what they were doing was in connection with a drug producing conspiracy.

Lord Justice Woolf said evidence from two pharmacists "of unquestionable integrity" showed

persons in the Patels' position "would not necessarily be put on notice by the orders they were given that the chemicals were required for the manufacture of Controlled Drugs."

Allowing the Patels' appeal, he said there were a number of complaints about the judge's two-day summing-up at the end of the 57-day trial which were justified. Individually, they were not of great significance — "however their cumulative effect is such as the judge in his summing-up did not place the defence of the Patels properly before the jury".



Mentholatum recently sponsored seven delegates to attend the World Congress of Physical Therapy. After this year's event the delegates visited the UK headquarters of the Mentholatum Co at Twyford to agree a series of clinical trials on Deep Freeze cold gel. Visitors (left to right): export manager Tony Boyd; Dr Magdi Iskander, Dubai; Mrs Asamoah, Ghana; Dr Corletto, Italy, with his wife; Mrs Antwi, Ghana; Dr T.A. Oshin, Nigeria; Mrs G. Harwood, Mentholatum; Professor Odia, Nigeria; and Mr H. Oglesby, Mentholatum's financial director

Llandyssul leaflet sparks DDA row

A leaflet to patients explaining their position with regard to doctor dispensing, issued by a consortium of pharmacists in Dyfed, has come under fire from the Dispensing Doctors' Association.

The situation was sparked by the decision by a group of Llandyssul doctors to move to a purpose-built surgery three quarters of a mile outside the town and apply to become a dispensing practice.

Five local pharmacists in Llandyssul, Newcastle Emlyn and Velindre teamed up with the Local Pharmaceutical Committee secretary to publish a leaflet about the situation.

Pharmacist Kenneth Rathbone told *C&D* they decided it was time to go on the offensive. "As a profession we have allowed ourselves to be governed by events and to react to them," he said.

A great deal of prescriptions come from outside the one mile limit. Towns like Llandyssul are not just centres of population but of trade, and as such the pharmacist can expect to draw prescriptions from anything up to a 10 mile radius, explained Mr Rathbone.

The bilingual leaflet, which Mr Rathbone describes as factual and of a high quality, explains the training pharmacists undertake and that they are available during normal business hours.

Under a heading "The Threat" the leaflet continues: "Some local doctors are seeking to dispense for their patients while others recognise the true value of the pharmacist. The dispensary at the doctors surgery would be staffed by non-professionals... You will then lose the security provided by your pharmacist checking your prescription."

The leaflet goes on to point out that doctor dispensing is more expensive, a claim denied by the DDA. Quoting recent Welsh figures which show the average cost per prescription (April 1990 to March 1991) was £6.26 for pharmacists and £7.04 for dispensing doctors. Mr Rathbone said: "If half the doctors in Wales went dispensing it would amount to £11 million a year extra."

The DDA has taken exception to the statement at the end of the Llandyssul leaflet: "Be safe! Use your local pharmacy for all your dispensing". An article in the DDA's *Journal* (July 1991) said: "It could well be interpreted by the 'man on the Llandyssul omnibus' that dispensing by the Llandyssul doctors is not safe."

As for the pharmacists, Mr Rathbone told *C&D* they are waiting to see what the doctors will do next. "The ball is very much in their court. The pharmacists will continue to press their case."

NI statistics

In April 1991, chemists and appliance suppliers in Northern Ireland dispensed 786,382 forms with an average of 1.652 prescriptions per form. Net cost was £9,433,515.07 — a gross cost per prescription of £7.56.

Sumatriptan approval

Glaxo have received UK approval for the injectable version of its migraine drug Imigran (sumatriptan). Glaxo plan to launch it next month, when details of dosage, side effects and pricing will be published. Approval for the tablet for is not expected for another six months.

Syntometrine recall

Sandoz Pharmaceuticals are recalling Syntometrine 10 by 1ml ampoules, batch number 556MFD0990. Some packs contain one ampoule showing a yellow discolouration, says the company. The affected ampoules are subpotent for ergometrine maleate and should not be used. Stock obtained from suppliers should be returned to them for replacement. Any direct customers should return stock,

marked "Product recall", to Sandoz Products Ltd, PO Box Horsforth Number 4, Calverley Lane, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4RP.

Baby muesli recall

Robinsons Baby Foods are recalling a batch of their baby breakfast muesli 110g, which is for infants of three months and upwards. Batch 1101A1, distributed between May 10 and July 10, contains egg noodles, an ingredient which is not suitable for infants until they are six months and over. All retail pharmacies have been mailed with details of the recall, say Robinsons. Adverts have also been carried in daily newspapers advising the public to return affected product. For queries freephone 0800 400440.

For Asian diabetics

The British Diabetic Association has produced a new booklet aimed at helping the Asian community live with diabetes. "A basic guide to diabetes" has been produced in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu, as well as English. The booklet (£0.50) is available from the BDA, 10 Queen Anne Street, London W1M 0BD.

ASA ticks off Scholl over use of model

The Advertising Standards Authority has upheld a complaint against a Scholl Consumer Products advertisement for Limmits biscuits. A complainant had questioned whether a testimonial describing how a person had been transformed by the product referred to the woman in the accompanying photograph.

Scholl acknowledged that the testimonial was not based on the experiences of the model, but said the copy described the experiences of many women and the model in question had been chosen for her "mesomorph" body type — a frame susceptible to fluctuations in weight.

The Authority noted that the copy carried no specific weight loss claims but considered the advertising was unclear, and asked Scholl to ensure fictitious cases used to endorse products are identified as such in future.

Bronchitis therapy

GPs must rethink their standard treatment of bronchitis, a consultant physician advised last week.

Some antibiotics commonly used, such as ampicillin and amoxycillin, were likely to become less effective in coming years with the increased resistance shown by *H. influenzae* and *Bran. catarrhalis*, said Dr Peter Ball, Infectious Diseases Unit, Cameron Hospital, Windygates, Fife. He told a Press meeting sponsored by Bayer that bronchitis was not just one disease but a spectrum of diseases; doctors must realise this if they were to avoid overtreatment or, in more severely ill patients, giving the wrong treatment, he said.

In previously healthy patients with acute simple bronchitis there was little evidence that antibiotics did much good and prescribing them could lead to resistance developing. Patients who had suffered regular bouts of some weeks over the past year or two could benefit from antibiotics to reduce time off work and prevent the disease from downgrading. Amoxycillin could still be effective if these patients had not previously received multiple courses.

Those with frequent episodes of purulent sputum and fever, reduced exercise tolerance and who were often housebound in Winter were unlikely to respond to standard therapy such as amoxycillin and erythromycin. In these cases quinolones were particularly effective; Augmentin was also a possibility but had the disadvantage that its sputum penetration was variable and high doses might be needed.

Patients with terminal obstructive airways disease had probably progressed too far to benefit from antibiotics, which should be given only according to the sensitivity of the organisms present. By this time other complications such as hypoxia were likely to have developed.

A new role for GPs?

Dispensing doctors are being asked to consider "pre-empting or reversing the predatory action of Boots" over monitored dosage systems to residential homes by using the systems in their own practices.

The Dispensing Doctors' Association says the cost, at 20p per strip, is somewhat more than the container allowance, but it is better than losing the dispensing fee entirely.

Doctors who are interested are urged to write to the DDA and if sufficient numbers reply the Association says it may be possible to "negotiate a better price".



Bad research induces bad practice

The use of *agent provocateurs* in practice research is quite rightly condemned for its obvious flaws and potential bias, but in a recent survey into pharmacists' knowledge of insulin therapy, which involved volunteers, the results, according to the authors, were so bad that the possible safety of insulin dispensing was called into question.

At first sight a particularly damaging indictment of pharmacists' expertise but, since no reference manuals were allowed and the emergency situations presented involved substitution of spurious formulations, it is no wonder the results were poor. These pharmacists were volunteers and willingly did their best under the artificial conditions presented to them, but in an emergency real-life situation, no pharmacist would commit him or herself to a substitution of insulin unless they had first checked the information very thoroughly.

If practice research is to accurately measure a pharmacist's ability in a real-life situation, then the research methodology will have to be carefully revised to ensure accurate conclusions and to preserve patient confidentiality. The studies so far are fatally flawed. It is not pharmacy that has been found wanting but the

research techniques employed, and before I would again co-operate willingly these techniques must be accurately redesigned.

Professional slight

A recent report in the *British Medical Journal* supports the safety of re-use of disposable insulin syringes and, despite previous statements from the Department of Health opposing the practice, requests them to intercede (*C&D* August 10, p 228) by suggesting that the contrary advice from community pharmacists is influenced by pecuniary advantage. This is gross slur of a sister profession and should be unconditionally withdrawn with full apology.

I have always maintained that single use can be the only advocacy since, to do otherwise, lays me open to claims for damages from any patient harmed by a re-used syringe. Certainly, the manufacturer would quite rightly wash their hands of the whole affair, and the Chemist Defence Association probably likewise. If the medical profession wishes to advise its patients to re-use disposable syringes that is its privilege, and the risk is its own, but it cannot use pharmacists as the whipping boys for its own timidity.

Repeats — right rules now, please!

What a revelation that Boots much criticised repeat prescription scheme may in fact be a breach of their NHS contract (*C&D* August 10). Certainly, that is how it is being interpreted in Scotland, and I cannot see that England and Wales are materially very different.

Some pharmacists have bravely stood up to maintain that Boots are only making public a practice already prevalent in many areas, saying that, in any case, this type of service should be encouraged. Perhaps so, but conversely the threat to many pharmacists' livelihood is very real. And many GPs are opposed to the idea and an unco-ordinated

approach where there is no local agreement is professionally unedified.

PSNC cannot impotently wring its hands and say it is unable to discuss the problem until its next meeting in September. This is now an NHS matter, a definitive statement is called for, and a little head-banging around the table of an emergency PSNC meeting could produce some enlightening results. If the Regulations preclude all such advertising of professional services, then that should be categorically stated and enforced. With the breathing space earned a properly constructed scheme could then be devised and introduced universally through appropriate changes to the contract.

Humour — not a bottomless pit?

Long ago when I was a mere lad and the art of pharmacy was still as important as its science, one of the standard treatments for diarrhoea suggested by us adolescent comics was the humble cork, but what about the size? This unprofessional frivolity was treated by our long suffering mentors with suitable admonishment and a more appropriate treatment then suggested to the innocent patient.

It does seem, however, that irresponsible youth may have possessed an inkling of future advances with the publishing of a report (*C&D* August 10, p228) on the use of rectal plugs for the treatment of chronic anorectal incontinence. Based on the Conseal colostomy plug, the incontinence plugs are made of polyurethane sponge wrapped in a water soluble coat in order to reduce them to the size of a conventional suppository. Once inserted the coat dissolves and the plug expands to form a seal in the anal canal.

An apparently simple alternative to the unsatisfactory use of long term drug therapy, but one which owes its inception to kitchen sink humour and its development to the sophistication of modern technology. Drug treatment could never totally return these patients to a normal life. Hopefully, a modern version of the much-maligned cork may yet prove to be the most satisfactory solution.

Topical REFLECTIONS

Counterpoints



Wrights go electric with Vaporizer

Wright's Vaporizer, which has been available for over 80 years to provide relief from cough and cold symptoms, is undergoing a dramatic change — its going electric.

Consumer surveys undertaken by LRC Products showed that the candle format was considered old fashioned. Previously, problems with people using the wrong candles had forced the company to replace refill candles with an entire refill kit which proved unpopular and expensive.

The resulting electric Vaporizer works in a similar way but is said to be safer. Replacement fluid (£2.65) and blocks (£1.93) can be purchased separately. The unit comes complete with a 2 metre flex, a fitted plug, and a red neon light showing whether the unit is on or off.

LRC believe the new Vaporizer is safer, provides an even, more steady heat and is less expensive to run. They have applied for the BSI safety symbol for the unit. The packaging has been redesigned with modern, eye catching graphics although it retains the same visuals, depicting a

sleeping child.

The old candle unit is being discontinued but consumers who already have a candle unit are being offered an electric one at half price. The new Vaporizer retails at £17.99 but consumers who already have a candle unit can purchase an electric one for £9. Information about the offer, including leaflets for consumers, will be mailed to pharmacists in September.

Consumers return their old candle unit and the pharmacist keeps the lid. When three lids have been collected, they are returned to LRC, with the customers name and address, using the supplied freepost envelopes.

LRC will then reimburse the retailer £7.65 for each unit plus a £1 handling fee. The offer is limited to the first 15,000 candle Vaporizers to be returned.

LRC plan to spend £500,000 on trade and consumer advertising, while PR activity will focus on radio and local Press. POS material is available including a vapour trial cardboard spiral which can be fixed to the ceiling. **LRC Products Ltd. Tel: 081-527 2377.**

Duragel and Duracreme improved

Durex Duragel and Duracreme spermicides are now available with improved formulations, say manufacturers LRC.

Both products, which are designed for use with Durex diaphragms, have had their pH modified to more closely match the normal conditions of the vagina. The active ingredient has changed from

nonoxynol-11 to nonoxynol-9, which has been shown to have some activity against some organisms responsible for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, say LRC.

The company is about to start an educational campaign aimed at doctors and nurses. **LRC Products Ltd. Tel: 081-527 2377.**

Sanatogen display unit and CLO promotion

Fisons representatives will be supplying pharmacists who order Sanatogen with a new counter display unit designed for products from the health supplements and single vitamins ranges.

The company has recently been supporting its single vitamin B6 product with a sampling programme through the provincial Press. This coincided with the launch of a Sanatogen booklet "Women's nutritional health and the menstrual cycle".

Sanatogen cod liver oil will be supported this Autumn with a TV licence stamp offer to build loyalty and stimulate repeat purchases.

For every two 500ml bottles or four 240ml bottles of cod liver oil purchased, customers can send for a free £1 television licence stamp. Only one of the purchases needs to be a promotional pack. **Fisons Consumer Health Plc. Tel: 0509 611001.**

Autumn bonus from Mentholatum

The Mentholatum Co are offering retail bonus trade prices across their product range from September 2.

The bonus trade prices per dozen are: — Mentholatum vapour rub tube £8.78, jar £9.13, nasal inhaler £4.56, lozenges £2.83.

Deep Heat rub 35g £8.79, 67g £12.51, 100g

£16.56; Deep Heat Extra Strength 55g £20.96, 110g £28.20; Deep Heat spray (20 per cent extra free) £13.13, pre-sport rub 60ml £13.41, lotion 60ml £14.20.

Deep Freeze cold gel £25.22; Cutipen cuticle remover £13.17; Stop 'n Grow nail biting deterrent £13.17. **Mentholatum Co Ltd. Tel: 0734 340117.**

Pharmalife from Lagap

Lagap are launching a range of Pharmalife supplements.

The range consists of evening primrose oil 500mg (45 £3.99), salmon oil

500mg (45 £5.49), and borage oil (starflower oil) 500mg (45 £5.49). **Lagap Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Tel: 0420 478301.**



Major relaunch for Aspro range

Nicholas Laboratories have relaunched their Aspro range in a move to build on the brand's heritage and increase its share of the pain relief market.

The relaunch includes two newly-branded products and an enhancement both in design and trade configuration of existing Aspro products.

To give greater "Aspro range synergy", Paraclear

and Junior Paraclear have been renamed Aspro Paraclear and Aspro Paraclear Junior. To maximise on-shelf impact, all four variants have been given a bolder, more modern appearance with greater emphasis on the Aspro name.

The company is also planning an extensive consumer support package, including poster advertising,

on-pack promotions and public relations activity, say Nicholas.

For retailers, point of sale material includes counter display units, A3 showcards and shelf edgers. To maximise profitability, the majority of products will be available in single facing units, say **Nicholas Laboratories Ltd, Healthcare Division. Tel: 0753 523971.**



Sanatogen proudly announce their £1 TV campaign.

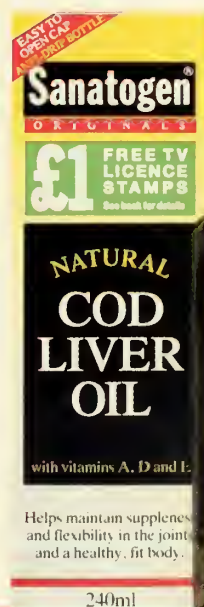
Last year's television licence stamp offer was the most successful Sanatogen promotion ever. So we're repeating it this Summer.

For every four 240ml or two 500ml bottles your customers buy, they can send for a free £1 TV licence stamp and only one of the purchases needs to be a promotion pack.

And when you look at our non-drip bottle with its easy open top and free measuring cup, it's easy to see we've got the competition licked.

Particularly when you consider Sanatogen Cod Liver Oil's lighter look, lighter taste, high quality and pure value for money.

If you want satisfied customers, more sales and healthy profits, then check your oil level now.



Also available in new easy to swallow capsules.

CALL YOUR FISON'S CONSUMER HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE OR PHONE 0509 611001 EXTENSION 45100 OR 45110.

Complan in a new
flavour.

Don't slip up.



Introducing a new addition to the Complan range which, together with major consumer press and promotional support, will ensure your customers go bananas.



On TV Next Week

GTV Grampian
B Border
BSB British Sky
Broadcasting
C Central
CTV Channel Islands
LWT London Weekend

C4 Channel 4
U Ulster
G Granada
A Anglia
TSW South West
TTV Thames
Television

TV-am Breakfast
Television
STV Scotland (central)
Y Yorkshire
HTV Wales & West
TVS South
TT Tyne Tees

Brylcreem Black:	All areas
Colgate, Great Regular Flavour:	All areas
Diocalm Ultra:	All areas
Endekay Dental Health Gum:	TV-am
Farley's Timers:	All areas
Impulse:	All areas
Just for Men:	All areas
Lanacane cream:	U.Y.C.LWT,TT & C4
Mentadent toothpaste:	All areas
Mum deodorant:	All areas
Nivea Visage:	All areas except LWT,TTV
Olvarit:	All areas
Sensodyne toothpaste:	All areas
Slim-Fast:	TV-am
Sure Power Stick:	All areas
Timotei shampoo:	All areas except CTV,TVS & C4

Money off Weleda

Weleda are running a money-off offer on their three top selling shampoos during September.

Packs of calendula, rosemary, and lemon and melissa shampoos will be

flashed 20p off the normal retail price. Trade price will be reduced from £1.08 to £0.90, giving a profit on return of 40 per cent, say **Weleda (UK) Ltd. Tel: 0602 303151.**

Imperial Leather takes a shower

Cussons are joining forces with shower manufacturers Triton this month to encourage consumer trial of Imperial Leather shower gel.

The gel will be included in 10,000 Triton shower packs during the month, and will be supported by a regional Press campaign

reaching around eight million people.

Cussons' research suggests only 50 per cent of consumers who shower regularly use a shower gel, although the average person now showers 3.2 times a week. **Cussons (UK) Ltd. Tel: 061-792 6111.**



Forever from Yardley

Forever, the latest fragrance from Yardley, is described as a "romantic floral oriental bouquet" and is expected to appeal to women of all ages.

A £1 million national television campaign, running in October, November and December, uses the song made famous by Nat King Cole: "When I fall in love, it will be forever".

The fragrance has a floral ylang ylang, marigold and citrus top note, followed by a warm jasmine, orange flower "fruity floral" mid note, then woody, musky base notes. Packaging incorporates a floral pattern in soft shades of mauve and lilac and the dome-shaped perfume bottle

uses frosted glass.

The Forever range comprises parfum de toilette spray (15ml £4.95; 25ml £7.95; 50ml £10.95), talc (100g £3.75), body lotion (200ml £4.95), creme bath (200ml £4.95) and parfum atomiser (10ml £9.95). For the launch a 15ml trial size spray will be available in a "designer style" carrier bag (£2.99).

The Lace range has been repackaged using pale blue packs with an embossed lace design in white. The new bottle has an embossed lace pattern across the shoulders. Yardley have plans for retailers to deal with current stocks so as to make room

for the new packaging.

Yardley have also improved the packaging of English Lavender, their fastest growing brand this year, and have introduced a liquid soap (200ml £2.99), hand and body lotion (200ml £3.75) and a bath and shower gel (200ml £3.75).

Lace and English Lavender will also be advertised on television this Autumn and pre-Christmas, and the total spend on the three brands will be over £3m. The company can arrange to visit pharmacies not already served by representatives. **Yardley of London Ltd. Tel: 0268 522711.**

Kodak cap their compact range

Kodak have introduced a new top of the range compact camera, the Kodak 935. It has been designed to make taking good pictures as simple as possible, and features automatic film loading and automatic DX film sensing to detect the film speed and allow for it.

To help prevent the "red-eye" effect sometimes caused by built-in flashes the 935 features a Sensalite swing-up

automatic flash. As the flash is raised away from the lens red-eye effects are minimised.

The flash body also duplicates as a lens cover and shutter lock when the camera is not in use.

Automatic wind-on and rewind are standard and the camera has a fully protected focus-free three element glass f4.5 lens, which retracts into the camera when it is not

in use to make it even more compact.

A key marketing feature is the packaging. The camera is not sold in a box but in a black "bumbag", distinguished by a red stripe.

The Kodak 935 comes complete with "bumbag", a Gold 200 film, a lithium battery to drive the autowind, and a wrist strap at around £50. **Kodak Ltd. Tel: 0442 61122.**



For all scaly scalp conditions

- ✓ A lightly fragranced formula with the strength of coal tar.
- ✓ Does not stain the skin, clothes or bath.
- ✓ Leaves the hair shiny and easy to manage.

ALPHOSYL
SHAMPOO

The effective scalp treatment in a cosmetic shampoo.



Hugo target independents with branded toiletries

Hugo Personal Care have launched Dentimint, the first toothpaste to be produced at the company's new toiletries plant in Bradford.

Dentimint (125ml, £0.59) is aimed at consumers who are looking for a toothpaste which delivers on quality, performance and taste, but which costs a few pence less, says the company's sales director Mike Davies.

"Shoppers often regard dental hygiene as a self indulgence and that type of expenditure is the first to suffer when the housekeeping budget is under seige," he says.

Dentimint has been developed for pharmacy and grocery independents and will be available through the cash and carry sector.

HPC, part of BP Nutrition's consumer products division, have also



launched a two-in-one shampoo specifically for independents.

Under the Nova label, the shampoo (200ml rrp £1.09) is claimed to perform "as well as any brand on sale in the high street". Two-in-one's have captured more than 25 per cent of the £190 million spent annually on shampoos and are still

growing, says Mr Davies. The Nova product will enable independents to compete by offering a top quality, but less expensive, alternative to the brand leader.

Hugo claim to be the largest manufacturer of private label toiletries in the UK. **Hugo Personal Care. Tel: 061-653 9037.**

Press and TV push for Poly

Henkel Cosmetics are starting a Press and television campaign for their two hair products, Poly Color Easy Color and Poly Style Deep Care Perm.

The campaign will run from September to December with a spend of over £2 million in the first year. Poly Color will be promoted on TV-am for three weeks from September 2. The commercial, aimed at 15-30 year old women, will also run regionally on ITV and Channel 4 in the London, Midlands and North West areas from September 2-29.

The brand will also be

supported with advertising in women's magazines including *Cosmopolitan*, *Company*, *She* and *More* from September to December.

Poly Style Deep Care will be supported from

September through to December with adverts in women's magazines including *Woman's Own*, *Bella*, *Best*, *Prima* and *Family Circle*. **Warner Lamhart. Tel: 0495 762468.**

£2 million spend for Macleans Sensitive

A £2 million national television campaign for Macleans Sensitive toothpaste will be on air from mid-August until the end of September.

The new commercial uses computer graphics to illustrate how dental sensitivity is caused and why Macleans Sensitive can help. It also underlines the benefit of the product's minty taste.

While nearly one third of the adult population suffers from dental sensitivity at some time, two-thirds of these do not use a sensitivity toothpaste, say **Smithkline Beecham Personal Care UK Ltd. Tel: 081-560 5151.**

Actibrush samples

By the end of September, around half the households in the UK and Ireland will have had the opportunity to sample Colgate-Palmolive's pre-brush rinse, Actibrush.

The company is producing 10 million samples for door-to-door delivery consisting of a 12ml sachet and a 20p money-off coupon off either size or flavour. Direct mailing of 50ml trial bottles with 50p-off coupons is planned.

This activity is part of an £8 million advertising and promotional spend supporting the Actibrush launch. A national television campaign runs until the end of the year. **Colgate-Palmolive Ltd. Tel: 0483 302222.**

Fisherman's friend goes sugar-free

Lofthouse of Fleetwood have extended their medicated confectionery range, Fisherman's Friend, with a sugar-free variant of Original Extra Strong.

The move is in response to an increasingly health conscious market where emphasis is on diet and fitness, says the company. Each new lozenge contains only 4 calories.

Initially the sugar-free variant will only be available through pharmacies, distributed by Chemist Brokers, says Lofthouse.

An extensive promotional campaign is planned, mainly in women's publications. Women and younger age groups will be targeted.

A major sampling operation will coincide with a public relations campaign. Over 8 million sample packs will be distributed at airports, railway stations, holiday camps, football matches and other outdoor events. **Distributors, Chemist Brokers, Division of Food Brokers Ltd. Tel: 0705 219900.**



Vosene packs offer free Macleans toothpaste

An in-pack promotion on two of Smithkline Beecham's brands will be running from early September.

Special packs of Vosene shampoo, 150ml or 300ml sizes, will contain a 25ml tube of Macleans Mild Mint toothpaste, free of charge. SB hope that this combination of two family brands will create a strong incentive for housewives to purchase the special packs.

The offer follows a similar offer with Vosene and Aquafresh toothpaste earlier this year, which proved successful, say SB. The Macleans name will benefit from the launch of a new advertising campaign in September and October which builds on the popular "tin soldiers" theme.

Smithkline Beecham Personal Care UK. Tel: 081-560 5151.

Nurdin & Peacock

Nurdin & Peacock's special offers for the period August 18 to September 6 include: Wash & Go 200ml by 6 (£6.29), Soft & Pure cotton wool pleats 50g by 12 (£3.15), Palmolive washing up liquid 500ml plus 50ml extra free by 12 (£3.99) and Jeyes Bloo and Bloo Green toilet freshener, 12 for the price of 11 (£4.09). **Nurdin & Peacock Plc. Tel: 081-946 9111.**

For mums to be..

Video Gems have released a new video called "R.E.P. — Relaxation & Exercise in Pregnancy" co-hosted by TV-am's Kathy Taylor and midwife and yoga instructor Tricia Robinson, whose methods are said to be approved by the National Childbirth Trust. **Video Gems. Tel: 081-993 7705.**

Starflower boost

Roche are spending £500,000 promoting their newest dietary supplement Starflower oil. A Press advertising campaign is running until the end of next month in women's magazines, with the headline "Let your head be ruled by your heart, not by your body". **Roche Products Ltd. Tel: 0707 328128.**

Effico prices

Pharmax Healthcare would like to emphasise that the rrp of the 300ml Effico tonic remains at £2.54 whereas the new 500ml size is £3.65. **Pharmax Ltd. Tel: 0322 550550.**

Larkhall sales

Larkhall Natural Health have appointed OTC Sales and Marketing to handle the distribution of key lines in the pharmacy sector from September 1. Initially concentrating on Lipcote lipstick sealer, Cantassium Ruthmol salt substitute and Filtro Neto cigarette filters, OTC will provide national coverage for the products, which will be supported with pharmacy only promotions, say Larkhall. **OTC Sales and Marketing. Tel: 0223 421820.**



Available to tempt Christmas shoppers this year from Ultra Glow is a book style presentation containing original loose bronzing powder, two Magic Lips lipsticks and a powder brush. The pack will retail at £19.95, a saving of £6.06 over the regular price of the contents. It will be available to stockists from late September. **Ultra Glow Ltd. Tel: 071-607 9983.**



How Asilone succeeds where others don't.

Unlike products that simply block reflux by rafting action, Asilone attacks the cause of indigestion and heartburn: excess acid.

It neutralises gastric acid and combats wind, whilst gently soothing the stomach lining.

The balanced formula of Asilone Liquid offers both fast action and a lasting effect. In addition, Asilone is extremely low in sodium, which makes it suitable for people on low-sodium diets.

This is why so many doctors prescribe Asilone. And why it's the leading pharmacy antacid.

Your recommendation for indigestion



Philips add three to hair dryer range

With an eye on fashionable high volume styles, Philips are taking diffuser dryers below £20 with the launch of three dryers offering pro-dryer performance and design in a compact lightweight format.

Two Power Blowers — the HP4355 (£14.95) —

have two heat/speed settings, low for styling and high for fast drying, concentrator nozzles for precise styling and the HP4356 (£18.95) comes complete with a diffuser. Both have 1,200W of power with a low noise level, and a hanging loop for storage.

The HP4320/D (£15.95) offers conventional drying or diffused drying with a diffuser "big enough to do the job" yet small enough to be easy to use. All three are designed in shiny "graphite". **Philips Home Appliances. Tel: 081-689**

Lentheric back on TV

Lentheric Colour Cosmetics are spending a further £500,000 on television advertising this Autumn, following the range's national launch in March.

Starting on August 19, the 10 and 20 second advertisements will run nationally for over six and a half weeks. Lentheric say they remain committed to the new range and, having achieved widespread distribution, will continue to back the brand both above and below the line.

Lentheric Morny Ltd. Tel: 0276 62181.

Double action Actif Mascara

Eye-Lite have introduced a new mascara said to meet the demands of the '90s woman who cares about her cosmetics but also needs up-to-date efficiency.

Actif Mascara (£5.15) combines a protein-enriched creamy formula with the attributes of a quick drying, long lasting waterproof mascara, says the company. The product also features an oval shaped brush. Actif mascara is available in five colours — black, brown, dark blue, leaf green and ice blue. **Mavala (UK) Ltd. Tel: 0732 459412.**

Mars torch appeal

As official snack food of the British Olympic team Mars have launched a campaign to raise of £250,000.

The appeal comprises an on-pack collection scheme: for every ten wrappers collected £0.50 will be donated to the team and consumers will receive money-off vouchers valid at Olympus Sports. National advertising with a spend of £1 million will support the appeal.

Mars will be spending £15m marketing the brand in the run up to the Olympics, focussing on Mars and M&M's brands. A range of commemorative packs will be available for Christmas and Easter. **Mars Confectionery. Tel: 0753 550055.**

Charity poster heads Buttercup campaign

A campaign with the Royal Society for Nature Conservation to raise money to protect Britain's threatened meadows, is the main thrust of LRC Products' Winter campaign for the Buttercup range.

This year, the company says it is spending more on the range than in the past 10 years. Apart from the charity campaign, advertisements in the women's Press and trade offers will also feature.

LRC have commissioned

a colour poster of endangered flower species. An on-pack promotion invites customers to send off for it (£1.99) and for every one sold, the company will donate £0.50 to the RSNC Wildlife Trusts Partnership's Wildlife and Meadows Campaign. LRC are hoping to raise £10,000.

The campaign has the backing of actress Susan Hampshire and details will be sent to the national Press and regional newspapers. Schools and youth groups will receive free posters.

Alan Main, marketing manager, Health & Beauty Division, stresses that the offer is not designed to sell more product, but to enhance the brand's image with existing customers.

On the advertising front, the Buttercup range is estimated to reach a total of 11.8 million people through a mixture of magazines including *Woman*, *Woman's Own*, *Bella*, *She* and *Prima*.

For retailers, LRC are

offering a free stock bonus and food hampers for extra commitment on display point of sale and shelf facings. The company has 800 one-year memberships of the RSNC for top stockists. **LRC Products Ltd. Tel: 081-527 2377.**

Buttercup Syrup



A washable nappy

Zippidys, a shaped, washable, 100 per cent cotton nappy, is being launched by Harlequin Fluffies.

The nappy has a double knit cotton lining and there is no need for additional liners. It has soft elasticated legs, Velcro fastenings and adjusts in two directions. There are no added dyes or colours. The first size to be

available fits newborn to 20lb babies (pack of three, £13.20) and a 20-35lb size should be introduced shortly. Pharmacies receive three free units with every 18 purchased. A brochure on their range can be obtained by sending an SAE to PO Box 534, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 1AQ. **Harlequin Fluffies. Tel: 0323 895730.**

PRESCRIPTION SPECIALITIES

Zinnat suspension for kids

Glaxo are extending the Zinnat range with a suspension, which is licensed for a wide range of infections including otitis media in children over three months.

The suspension contains cefuroxime axetil 125mg in 5ml and is available in 70ml bottles (£7.20 trade). The recommended dosage is 5ml twice a day or 10ml twice a day for children aged two and over with otitis media. It should be given after food.

A number of clinical studies have been conducted to examine the role of cerufoxime axetil in the management of otitis media. A randomised, blind, multicentre comparison study of 377 infants with acute otitis media concluded that cefuroxime axetil has a greater clinical efficacy than cefaclor, and causes fewer side-effects than amoxycillin-clavulanate, say **Glaxo Laboratories Ltd. Tel: 081-990 9444.**



General Designs are launching a range of Ener-G rice pasta which is available on FP10. The range consists of tagliatelle, cannelloni, lasagna, spaghetti, vermicelli, large shells and small shells, each pack containing enough for about six meals (all £2.25 trade). Ener-G Pasta is gluten-free, wheat-free, soya-free, maize-free and low in sodium. It is recommended for the dietary management of those who are allergic to wheat and others who suffer from gluten-sensitive enteropathies including coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis. Ener-G pasta tastes as good as regular pasta, is easy to use, can be eaten hot or cold, and can be sold for £2.99. Distributors: General Designs Ltd. Tel: 081-337 9366.

Phenytoin tabs

The Department of Health has extended the concession on phenytoin tablets until the end of August, when it will be renewed. Under the agreement, where the prescriber has been contacted and agreed the supply of an alternative product eg Epanutin capsules, the cost of the alternative will be reimbursed on endorsement.

Valium supps

Sinclair Pharmaceuticals have taken over the distribution of Valium (diazepam) 10mg suppositories. **Sinclair Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Tel: 0483 426644.**

Trisequens in three

Novo Nordisk are introducing an additional pack size for Trisequens: a three-month pack consisting of three 28 tablet calendar packs in a single outer pack (£11.22 trade). **Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Tel: 0293 613555.**

Extra Greens are good for you

Effico, the distinctive green coloured tonic is now available in a new, large 500ml bottle – so there's extra greens for your customers and extra profit for you!

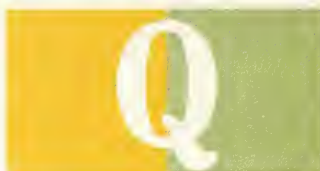
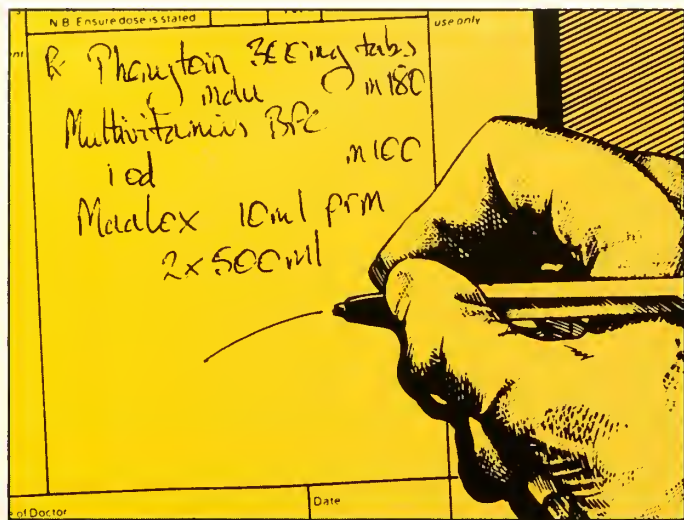
Effico is the only tonic available containing an appetite promoter as well as 'B' vitamins, providing a pick-me-up after illness. This could be one good reason why pharmacy sales have increased by 14% over the past twelve months.¹

Now in a new 500ml bottle, your customers have even more choice and value for money.

With a bright, colourful pack and an extensive advertising campaign in the National Daily Press, there's no doubt that Extra Greens will be a tonic for your business!



This prescription is awaiting collection from your pharmacy. The GP calls to ask which antidepressant he can prescribe with phenytoin for this patient, who is in his surgery for the second time this week. You know the man, a normally cheerful 67 year-old who lives alone. He has just returned home after staying with his family for three months, complaining of malaise and nausea after meals. He was prescribed phenytoin as a therapeutic trial for trigeminal neuralgia four months ago by a local consultant.



1. Is there a pharmacological explanation for the symptoms?
2. What comments would you make about the prescription?
3. Which antidepressant would you recommend?



1. Although many factors could account for the symptoms, one possibility is that the nausea and malaise are due to phenytoin. These symptoms are often the first associated with a rise in blood levels beyond the therapeutic range.

Circumstantial evidence which favours this theory is that a small quantity would have been given initially (for the therapeutic trial); he has since been away from home and may have had the prescription renewed elsewhere; and an alternative brand of phenytoin tablets, with greater bioavailability, may have been dispensed. It may therefore be worthwhile to check the serum phenytoin level to exclude this

possibility.

2. Anticonvulsants are used for the treatment, not prophylaxis, for trigeminal neuralgia. Given the vague directions for dose, you should check that he is taking phenytoin correctly and suggest that capsules are substituted for tablets to avoid possible future problems with bioavailability.

Maalox may impair the absorption of phenytoin and will not necessarily improve nausea; an antacid may be unnecessary if phenytoin proves to be the cause.

Multivitamins may be needed by some elderly men living alone. However, this man has just returned from a long holiday with his family who, on balance, are likely to have fed him better than he might do himself. So, if he is suffering from symptoms of poor nutrition, there may be an alternative explanation.

3. Even people who are outwardly cheery may be depressed but there is a possibility that phenytoin is at the root of the problem; this should be excluded before prescribing antidepressants.

The interaction between phenytoin and antidepressants may be pharmacodynamic — tricyclic antidepressants lower the seizure threshold, or pharmacokinetic — phenytoin reduces plasma levels of tricyclics. Neither is relevant in this case. However, the elderly cope poorly with the adverse effects of tricyclics and alternative agents should be considered.

The outlook is dry

Ditropan^{*}

Oxybutynin hydrochloride

*The UK's only licensed
oxybutynin*

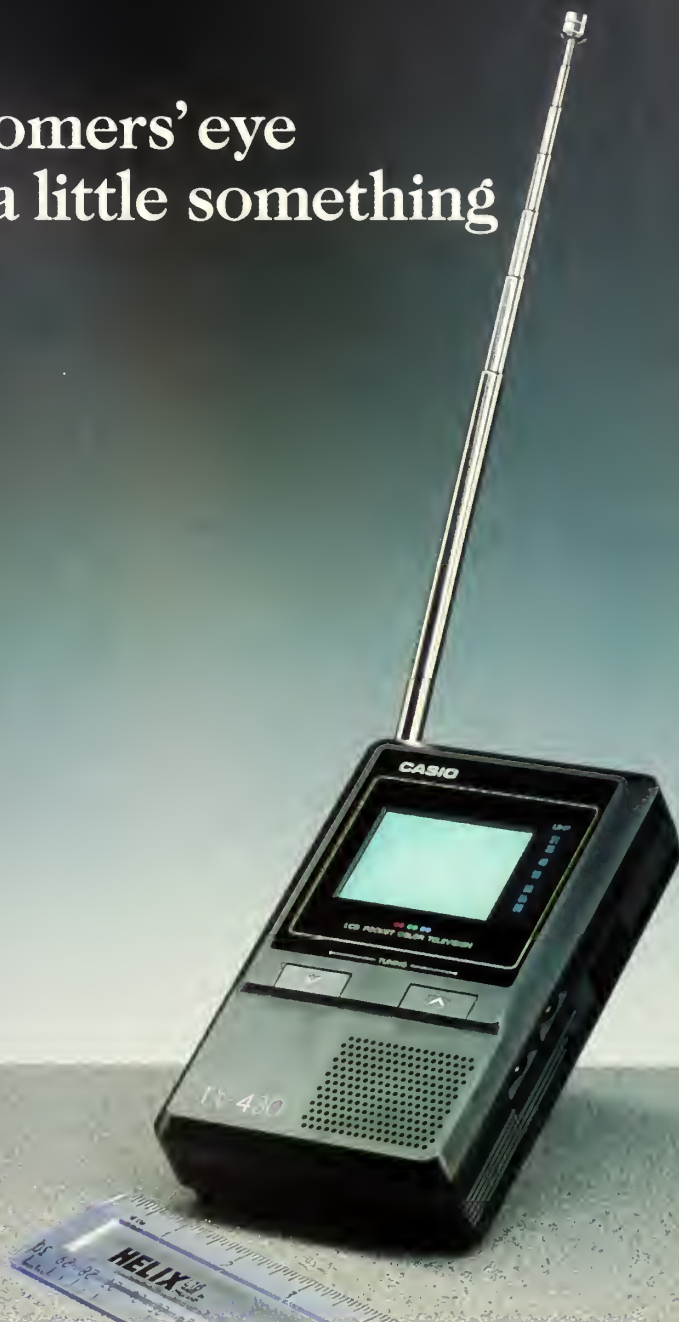
Further information is available from:
SMITH & NEPHEW PHARMACEUTICALS LTD.

Smith+Nephew

Bampton Road, Harold Hill, Romford, Essex RM3 8SL. Telephone: 04023 49333. Telex: 898058 SMINEPG. Fax: 04023 71316

* Trade Mark
July 1991

Catch your customers' eye
and we'll give you a little something
to look at, too.



There's an exciting new consumer promotion starting soon for One Touch, the extremely popular revolutionary range of depilatory products: When your customers buy one pack, they can send away for an exclusive tape cassette on hair removal.



And if you make sure they know about it by displaying the free promotional material, you'll increase your chances of making even more of a POR on this best selling

product than you do at the moment.

But if that isn't a big enough incentive to get busy, we've added a little extra one of our own: The top 100 chemists who, in our opinion, produce the best in-store display will also win one of these handy Casio miniature colour TVs.

So start channelling your energy into pulling in even more customers. And if your own wholesaler isn't participating, simply contact us direct.

Because even though we're the UK's sole distributor, we'd like everyone to get a look in.



HELPING YOU BUILD YOUR BUSINESS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

UniChem plc, UniChem House, Cox Lane, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1SN. Tel: 081-391 2323.



Make a profit from Prof Togs.



From the man who successfully launched the now famous Ultra Togs 'stay dry panel'

New leak shields!

Ultra Absorbent Togs' amazing new leak shields will be taking the nappy world by storm. (No more messy leaks at the legs!)

Prof Togs will be explaining the benefits of

our unique leak shields on national television and in all major magazines.

His face will be known to millions of mums throughout the country. Prof Togs will become a household name, a megastar.

Join Prof Togs on the road to fame and fortune. Stock up on the new Ultra Absorbent

Togs nappies and improve your profits now.

This, ladies and gentlemen, could be the start of something big, big, big.

For any further information on how Ultra Absorbent Togs nappies can improve your profits, please contact Swaddler's Customer Services Department 091-482 5566.

Intramuscular injection of insulin

The introduction of disposable insulin syringes with a shorter needle led to changes in the way people are taught to inject. Instead of raising a fold of skin and injecting at 45 degrees, they are now instructed to insert the needle almost to its full length at 90 degrees; lean people may be advised to raise a skin fold first.

It now appears that this advice could lead to more rapid and variable absorption. The problem may be worse in children, who tend to have less subcutaneous fat than adults. This has now been confirmed in a group of children in Manchester. Using ultrasonography to measure the depth of subcutaneous fat at the standard injection sites, it was found that the distance from skin to muscle or peritoneum was less than 12.5 mm (the length of the needle) in most boys at most sites except the buttock; in girls of the same age, this distance was less than 12.5 mm at only one site, the calf.

Most of the children injected at 90 degrees, suggesting that many are at risk from injecting insulin intramuscularly. Raising a skin fold increased the distance by an average of 3mm, confirming that this could be a sensible technique for children to adopt.

Archives of Disease in Childhood 1991;66:879-82



Methotrexate hepatotoxicity

Low-dose methotrexate is a valuable second-line agent in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) but there is a risk of liver damage during prolonged use. Although methotrexate is

not the last resort in treating RA, few therapeutic options remain if treatment is unsuccessful. It is therefore important to identify patients at risk and manage their symptoms promptly.

Hepatic fibrosis is associated with the duration of treatment with methotrexate and the total dose administered, which suggests that accumulation of the drug may be one factor in its pathogenesis. Using a computerised imaging system to measure the deposition of collagen in liver biopsies from patients treated with methotrexate for RA, a group of Australian doctors has demonstrated that the concentration of methotrexate and its metabolites are

significantly higher in those patients who develop the most marked fibrosis.

The metabolites of methotrexate are retained within cells for long periods and share the marked enzyme inhibitory effects of the parent compound. Hepatic injury could result from prolonged inhibition of folate synthesis or depletion of this important vitamin; in either case, the cell would lose vital nucleotides and die.

This observation, if confirmed, could ultimately lead to a diagnostic test which would identify patients at greatest risk of methotrexate hepatotoxicity.

Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases 1991;50:477-80

Adverse CNS effects of NSAIDs

Most people are familiar with the adverse effects of NSAIDs on the gastrointestinal tract, skin, bone marrow and kidney; indomethacin is a familiar cause of adverse central nervous system effects in the elderly but few are aware that other NSAIDs are occasionally associated with effects on the CNS. Although the frequency of these effects is low, NSAIDs are so widely used that a large number of people may be at risk.

In a review of published literature, three categories of CNS effects were identified: aseptic meningitis, psychosis and cognitive dysfunction.

Meningitis has been associated most frequently with ibuprofen, sulindac and naproxen, particularly in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus. Symptoms including fever, headache and neck stiffness, typically begin after a second or subsequent course of treatment; cross reactivity between NSAIDs is uncommon. The mechanism underlying this reaction appears to be patient hypersensitivity.

Psychosis is most commonly reported with indomethacin but has also been associated with the structurally related drug sulindac. Symptoms include hallucinations, paranoia and depersonalisation. The mechanism is unknown but the structural similarity of indomethacin to serotonin may be one explanation.

Indomethacin is also a common cause of more subtle CNS effects but other NSAIDs, including naproxen and ibuprofen, have been associated with impaired memory, depression and inability to concentrate in the elderly. Attempts to measure these effects objectively have produced evidence that the changes are generally mild and of little consequence, but the appearance of isolated case reports suggests that some people are worse affected than others.

Reviewing publications is an unreliable way of assessing the frequency of adverse reactions and determining which drugs are the major cause because one publication tends to introduce bias by prompting reports of the same problem. Nonetheless, the NSAIDs as a whole may cause adverse CNS effects and the elderly appear to be at greatest risk.

Archives of Internal Medicine 1991;151:1309-13



Lifestyle changes reduce cholesterol

With much of the debate on treating hypercholesterolaemia concentrating on drug therapy, it is easy to forget that modification of lifestyle is the first step in reducing high cholesterol levels. Recent data from the United States demonstrate just how successful such an approach can be.

Over 4,500 people aged between 20 and 92 with an average total cholesterol level of 6.06 mmol/l attended a three-week residential course in California between 1977 and 1988. On entry, 40 per cent of participants had coronary heart disease; 43 per cent had hypertension; 16 per cent had diabetes; and many had more than one diagnosis. The course offered a personalised exercise programme of walking and aerobics classes; a diet high in fibre and complex carbohydrates but low in fat and salt; and educational classes about risk factors and disease. There was no attempt to restrict calories unless participants chose to do so.

By the end of the course, the average cholesterol level had fallen by 23 per cent or 1.4 mmol/l; the reduction was proportionately greater in individuals with higher cholesterol levels initially. At follow up after 18 months, most of the benefit had been sustained. Age had no significant effect on the outcome.

It is perhaps easier to contemplate exercise and a healthy diet in sunny California than in a damp UK but the benefits achievable through changes in lifestyle are clearly worth the effort.

Archives of Internal Medicine 1991; 151: 1389-94

Thiazide diuretics and hip fracture

It is estimated that a third of women and 17 per cent of men may experience hip fracture by the age of 90. The excess mortality associated with hip fracture may be as high as 12-20 per cent, so the discovery that thiazide diuretics increase bone mass and reduce calcium excretion has important implications for treatment. The latest evidence is, however, less encouraging.

The use of diuretics by a group of 400 elderly people admitted with hip fracture was compared with that in a control group of healthy people matched for age and sex. After adjustment for risk factors such as illness history, weight, drug

use and stroke, the relative risk of hip fracture among current users of thiazide diuretics was significantly increased at 1.6. The risk was similar after short and long-term use but there was a trend to greater risk associated with higher doses. The risk associated with frusemide was substantially greater: among current users, the relative risk increased almost four fold.

These findings offer no support to the hypothesis that thiazides might protect against fracture in the elderly. Furthermore, frusemide, which promotes calcium excretion, could make the problem worse.

Annals of Internal Medicine 1991; 115: 1-6

Non-steroidals or simple analgesics for osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is the commonest disease of the joints and a major cause of pain and immobility in the community. Although the pathogenesis is uncertain — for example, it is not clear whether inflammation is a cause or a result of the disease — treatment of mild disease with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs is common despite recommendations by some specialists that simple analgesics such as paracetamol should be used instead: there is an understandable belief that paracetamol cannot be as effective as NSAIDs.

Now this belief has been put to the test: paracetamol 4g/day has been compared with ibuprofen in analgesic (1200mg daily) and anti-inflammatory (2400mg daily) doses in a double-blind trial in 184 patients with mild to moderate osteoarthritis of the knee. After four weeks, overall pain scores improved by 10-12 per cent in each group of patients;

although pain on walking and at rest was better with both doses of ibuprofen, paracetamol proved equally effective in improving the distance patients could walk before pain forced them to stop. Knee tenderness, swelling and flexibility did not change significantly overall. There was no difference in outcome and adverse reactions were minor and comparable between the groups.

In the short term, analgesia is therefore as good as anti-inflammatory treatment in controlling symptoms in patients with moderate disease; although the possible benefits of longer treatment with paracetamol were not demonstrated, it is not certain that long-term treatment with NSAIDs improves the outcome of osteoarthritis and there is also concern that these drugs may enhance joint destruction.

New England Journal of Medicine 1991; 325: 87-91

Excess mortality with diuretics

People with diabetes who are treated for hypertension with diuretics are five times more likely to die from cardiovascular disease than if their hypertension goes untreated, according to epidemiologists from the United States.

A total of 700 people with diabetes were followed up for 4.5 years to compare mortality associated with various treatments for hypertension. The group was divided into: normotensive individuals; those with untreated hypertension; and people with hypertension treated with diuretics alone,

other agents alone, or both.

In keeping with the known mortality of diabetes, the commonest cause of death in every group was coronary artery disease, with renal failure and stroke accounting for most of the remainder. There was a large excess of death associated with treatment for hypertension, especially among patients with proteinuria. However, the mortality among those with untreated hypertension was not significantly different from that of normotensive people. The difference was associated with diuretics: compared with normotensive individuals, the relative risk of death associated with treatment with diuretics alone was 5, or 3.4 if treatment was combined with other agents. This excess risk could not be explained by renal disease or insulin treatment.

The increase in mortality was evident within a year of beginning treatment, ruling out long-term complications. Paradoxically, diuretics were the most effective in lowering blood pressure, suggesting that excessive blood volume reduction and activation of the renin-angiotensin system may have deleterious consequences in these patients.

Whatever the explanation, the authors conclude that aggressive treatment to control blood pressure in hypertensive diabetic patients should not include diuretics.

Archives of Internal Medicine 1991; 151: 1350-6

Preventing low-dose aspirin bleeds

Large clinical trials have shown clearly that the risk of death from cardiovascular disease is significantly reduced by taking prophylactic low-dose aspirin. However, even at 75-300mg daily, aspirin causes gastric mucosal bleeding sufficient to produce black stools and there is some evidence of an increased risk of peptic ulcer.

Some gastric damage can be avoided by using enteric-coated (EC) aspirin. In a four-week comparison of EC and plain aspirin in doses of 300 and 2400mg daily in healthy volunteers, plain aspirin produced two to four haemorrhagic lesions per person, increasing bleeding from a baseline of 0.9 microl/10 minutes to 2.8 at 300mg daily and 7.2 at 2400mg daily. By contrast, the number of lesions observed with EC aspirin was no different from placebo; bleeding was 1.0 microl/10 minutes at the lower dose, rising to 1.5 at the higher dose.

Each dose and formulation of aspirin significantly reduced synthesis of gastric prostaglandin (required for protection against mucosal damage) and serum thromboxane (required for prophylaxis against cardiovascular disease). Mucosal injury and bleeding were correlated with serum concentrations of salicylate: the two high-dose formulations achieved concentrations of 90mg/l whereas 300mg plain aspirin produced levels of 16mg/l compared with 7mg/l after EC aspirin.

Enteric-coated aspirin is therefore superior to a plain formulation in the short term, though longer term safety is unproved. This study demonstrates that much of aspirin's effects in the stomach are due to a topical action and that an EC formulation might be preferable for low-dose prophylaxis.

British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology 1991; 32: 77-83



Research Digest is a regular series written by drug information specialist Steve Chaplin MRPharmS, looking at current developments in medicine.

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Move to oral syringes set for March '92

The 5ml dilution convention for liquid medicines is likely to be replaced by the use of plastic oral syringes in March, 1992. The Department of Health had proposed an earlier date but has now agreed to a postponement, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Council heard at this month's meeting.

The Society and the British Medical Association had advised the Department that it would not be possible to complete a revision of all the entries containing information on dilutions in time for the next British National Formulary, to be published in September. It was felt any changes should coincide with the following edition, due in March 1992.

The BMA had also advocated that the inclusion of oral syringes in the Drug Tariff should not be delayed until March 1992, because many paediatric patients were already receiving medication (initially prescribed in hospitals) via oral syringes, and difficulties were being experienced with supplies.

Warning on doctors' assistants' dispensing courses Council agreed that pharmacists should not be advised to become involved in providing training courses for dispensing assistants in doctors' surgeries unless the courses met certain minimum standards. Such courses would have to be of sufficient duration and content and contain work-based practical experience within pharmacies to a standard no lower than that prevailing in courses for pharmacy dispensing assistants.

Council believed such requirements were in the public interest, and that pharmacists asked to advise on such courses should insist on those requirements as minimum standards.

A pharmaceutical adviser to a family health services authority had been asked to assist in a local training course for dispensing assistants in doctors' surgeries. The



course, to be run by a local college, offered no practical experience under the supervision of a pharmacist.

Future of NHS Council approved comments to be made by the Society on current proposals for the future of the NHS. A working group had prepared draft comments on "Integrating primary and secondary health care" and "The health of the nation" but had decided initially that no response was necessary on "FHSAs — Today's and tomorrow's priorities".

Accepting that benefits would flow from greater integration, the first submission emphasised that the Society was keen to secure recognition of the role that pharmacists had to play in co-ordinating pharmaceutical care and particularly continuation of treatment for patients moving from one care sector to another.

The draft submission on "The health of the nation" drew attention to the potential of pharmacists in health promotion, illness prevention and screening for early signs of illness, which had been seriously underutilised in the past.

Pharmacy study The secretary and registrar and the president had met the National Audit Office's director of health audit (Mr R.M. Bennett) and audit manager (Mr John Step) on July 16 for a discussion on the forthcoming study of pharmacy. The main points they had made had been the need for the inquiry to take account of the full range of services

provided by the community pharmacist and to bear in mind the Society's role in registration and inspection of pharmacies and in law enforcement. The Society's representatives had been concerned that the National Audit Office might underestimate the importance of the community pharmacist's role in the dispensing and sale of medicines, since concentration on the "extended role" may have diverted attention from the vital importance of the core community pharmacy role.

Fewer Council meetings Council agreed to seek Privy Council approval for a reduction in the minimum number of 11 Council meetings held each year, by omitting the January and May meetings. Council decided to seek an amendment to the Society's byelaws so that from 1992 it would have to hold meetings "not less than eight times a calendar year". Although the intention was to hold nine meetings, this wording would give flexibility.

Rural dispensing symposia The Society and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee are to hold two symposia on rural dispensing for pharmacist members of FHSAs in London on October 21 and Leeds on October 28.

CRCs on liquids The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Child Accident Prevention Trust have agreed to co-operate with the Society in pressing for the development of child-resistant closures for oral liquid medicines. The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry has been asked to urge pharmaceutical companies to undertake development work to further the objective of supplying all liquid medicines in child-resistant containers. Various new types of CRC for liquid medicines in development are likely to overcome some disadvantages of existing closures.

Practice guidelines The

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee has agreed to send all local pharmaceutical committees a copy of guidelines on good prescribing practice produced by the Sheffield LPC. The aim is to encourage further each LPC to produce its own guidelines.

EC liability The European Community's Economic and Social Committee has rejected by a narrow majority the European Commission proposal on the reversal of the burden of proof in respect of the liability of suppliers of services. Among the reasons were that representative bodies had not been consulted on the Commission's proposal, that the cost of providing services would increase and that the proposal could go against the consumer interest.

The UK Inter-Professional Group is to write to the Department of Trade and Industry expressing concern at the lack of consultation with the professions.

Steroid clarification Council is to ask the Home Office to set out the way in which proposed additional controls on anabolic steroids would improve on the provisions of the Medicines Act 1968.

London weekends Council decided that the Society should consider the possibility of organising "London weekends" which would allow members and guests to make a half-day visit to the Society's headquarters building as part of a package which would include travel, hotel accommodation and a theatre visit.

Ag and Vet course fees The course fee for 1992 for the diploma in agricultural and veterinary pharmacy will be £850 for pharmacists on the British Register and £1,200 for pharmacists from other countries.

Animal medicine ethics Council agreed that the Code of Ethics paragraph (1.8) on methods of sale of medicinal products should not apply to animal medicines intended for prophylactic treatment of a herd or flock. The Ethics Committee also reaffirmed earlier decisions that animal medicines should be exempt from the requirement of paragraph 1.9 that medicines should not normally be distributed by mail order.

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Whistle stop?

With reference to your editorial on the advertising of NIS Pharmaceutical Services (C&D August 10), I was surprised to read your statement that anyone could have stopped previous initiatives by a complaint to a Family Health Services Authority.

I made a complaint to my Family Practitioner Committee (as it then was) in November 1989, about a company advertising its services to residential homes, and I believe several other pharmacists made similar complaints in other areas. I am still awaiting the outcome.

You claim to see a level playing field here. As you must have eyesight far superior to most of us, I hope you will soon be able to see the emergence of a referee from the changing rooms!

F.W. Taylor
Cheshire

Level playing fields

Last week in *Comment* you mentioned a "level playing field" for pharmacy. The level playing field has indeed been there all along, and I have been playing on it since November 1989 when I complained to Clwyd Family Practitioner Committee that Boots promotional activities, with regard to residential homes, were in breach of NHS Regulations for precisely the reasons now referred to by the Pharmaceutical General

Council (Scotland).

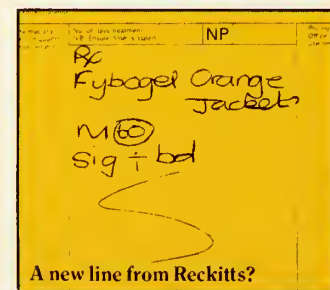
If a similar complaint were made to every family health services authority in the land the opposition would have to play at many different venues and with many different balls, simultaneously. It would be good to have a full team on the pitch at last.

Allan G. Jones
Rhyl, Clwyd

Be warned

There is an addict who is touring towns in Lancashire. He is quietly spoken, in his thirties, has a goatee beard, wears spectacles with brown frames and always has a dark holdall type of shopping bag. He always asks for Kaolin and Morphine Mixture. If refused, he leaves quietly. So far he has been noticed in Bolton, Ramsbottom and Royton.

T.H. Curry
Bury, Lancashire



This grade two listed pharmacy is reputedly the oldest in the country, having been trading as a pharmacy for over 500 years. It has been on the market, offered with a five year term lease, and complete with Georgian pharmaceutical shop fittings. Situated in Faversham's medieval market square in Kent, the Old Pharmacy still has many of its original features from the late 14th and early 15th century, and has retained elements from every century since

Points of law

PAYE payments

One good thing to come out of the last Budget has been a decrease in the administration required of small employers in relation to PAYE, National Insurance contributions and deductions from payments to subcontractors. Instead of these having to be made monthly they may now be done quarterly for employers and contractors whose average monthly payments of PAYE, NIC and deductions from payments to subcontractors are less than an average monthly total of £400.

The rules began on April 5, and payments must be made for the tax quarters ending July 5, October 5, January 5 and April 5. If he or she falls within the necessary payment band an employer may make a decision to pay tax in this way at any time, so a decision can be delayed until the next quarter. Notification of an intention to pay quarterly does not have to be made to the Revenue except in the case of new businesses.

Tax on loans by employers

Often an employee will come to his or her employer asking for a loan. It may be of a purely nominal amount, or it may be for a season ticket. There is, of course, nothing wrong with the employer making the loan. In a way it may inspire a sense of loyalty from the employee, but it is essential to make sure the tax position is understood.

Directors — for loans are often made to them as a perk — and employees earning £8,500 or more including gross expenses payments and the value of benefits in kind, are liable for tax on benefits in kind.

The amount chargeable to tax is based on the difference between the interest paid by the employee and the interest which would have been paid on a loan at the "official rate" of interest. In the Budget an undertaking was given that the official rate would be broadly in line with typical mortgage rates. As at May 6 the official rate was fixed at 12.75 per cent and will go up or down as the mortgage rate fluctuates. It will not normally change in response to movements of less than one half per cent.



"One good thing to come out of the Budget has been a decrease in the administration required of small employers..."

Talking costs with a solicitor

One of the most common complaints against solicitors is that of overcharging; yet, often, this comes about because the basis on which fees would be calculated was never established at the outset.

There are a variety of ways in which fees can be charged. One of the most common in respect of property transactions is the fixed fee. Another is an agreed fee which can be revised upwards if, for example, the work undertaken becomes unexpectedly protracted. A third is the variable hourly rate. Partners will cost more than assistant solicitors who will, in turn, cost more than unqualified staff. Different kinds of work may be charged at different rates.

Solicitors often charge on an hourly rate with an additional mark-up based on the complexity and degree of responsibility required. There is also a percentage fee.

The Law Society encourages solicitors to make forecasts of costs if at all possible. These could be in a range or the provision of a maximum, but it is up to the client as well to make sure they know the likely sums involved. Solicitors are really no different from hairdressers or builders. You

would want to know how much a haircut is going to come to or what the rebuilding of a wall will cost before you decide to employ the contractor. It should be the same with a solicitor. Remember to get the quotation in writing, and find out whether this includes VAT and disbursements or whether they are on top of the quoted figure.

Employee protection

One of the most important duties an employer has is to protect the health and safety of his employees. The Health and Safety Commission has just published its fourth guide to the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 (HMSO £3.00). Not only does the guide set out the intentions behind the legislation but it explains employers' duties in detail along with the duties and powers of the enforcing authorities. There is also a section on prosecution procedure and penalties, as well as specimen improvement and prohibition notices.

PAYE returns

The Inland Revenue, which does sometimes make mistakes, this year has issued a batch of Employers' Annual Return Forms P35 dated 1990-1 instead on 1990-2. Any employer receiving one of the former forms should discard it and apply for a correct one.

Strictly, Employers' Returns should be made by May 18 after which penalties would normally start to be levied. However, the Revenue has allowed employers until July 19, before starting to impose penalties for late submission. With an additional two months' grace there cannot be too much in the way of excuse for late returns this year.

Security for VAT

It is not generally realised that the Customs and Excise have a fairly draconian power under the VAT Act 1983 Schedule 7 s 5(2). It is the right to insist that a trader deposits a security in respect of an anticipated six months VAT liability. It is most used in relation to directors of failed businesses who reapply to be registered for VAT in respect of a new venture, and it is also often used in the case of persistent defaulters.

In these cases the practice is to demand six months anticipated liability if it appears 'requisite' to do so. The trader is given 30 days to come up with either a cash deposit or a bank guarantee. In one case where the trader offered a charge on his house the Customs declined to accept it. If the trade cannot come up with cash or security then he must cease to trade.

There is a right of appeal against a decision by the Customs but the onus is on the trade to show the Customs has acted unreasonably or taken irrelevant matters into account. It is a very difficult to prove.

All this means is that it is essential for traders to keep up with their VAT records and payments. Except in cases of dishonesty the Customs tend not to distinguish between the innocent and guilty over those who get in default. A trader with a poor VAT compliance record may well find himself up against this onerous regulation. A trader who has gone bust owing VAT may well have greater difficulty in starting up in business again.

Numark launch free working guide



Numark have backed up their new retail concept (C&D March 30, p521) with the introduction of a sales development guide for independent pharmacies. The voluntary trading organisation's A-Z Manual provides an overview of the market, details its own support services, and offers advice on improving image and profitability. There is also a series of planograms which can be collected bimonthly to add to the manual.

Numark retailing development director David Wood says: "We get asked regularly for merchandising and marketing advice and this is our response."

The guide is presented in the form of an A4 loose-leaf ring binder so that it can be expanded and updated "as and when required". It is to be provided free to Numark members.

Mr Wood emphasises that the A-Z Manual is a document of everyday value for pharmacists, providing practical and objective merchandising and marketing advice.

Following sections looking at the market background for community pharmacy, the manual gives an overview of Numark and an overview of the market, including the threats and opportunities available to independent pharmacies, says Mr Wood. "The guide looks at branding, the pharmacy as a Numark pharmacy, and looks at other support services

and promotions programmes as well as own brand programmes and point of sale kits."

A key separate section looks at the image of the independent pharmacy — how to gain more profitability from the same amount of shelf space. "We started off by defining core product groups taking A.C. Nielsen's research data. Together we looked at what each market is worth and what space the pharmacist should allocate to each group."

Mr Wood points out that this kind of information is especially valuable to pharmacists as the allocation of shelf space can "fulfill your own prejudices to a certain extent". Nevertheless, he stresses that the figures provided in the analysis are national averages from which pharmacists would vary according to their own customer base.

The final element in the guide is a series of planograms which can be collected from Numark's *Newsline* magazine. Up to three planograms will be included at a time.

"By sending out the planograms stage by stage the pharmacists and their assistants have the opportunity to re-market stage by stage. This approach also allows the pharmacist to test out the quality of the planograms."

The first planogram to be sent out is for vitamins, minerals and supplements. Seven Seas helped in its compilation but the work was

overseen by Logistics, a part of Nielsen. The planogram has allocated more space to Fisons, as Numark see an opportunity to "grab back business from grocers".

"We have done what we feel to be fair," say Numark who "hope to complete the planograms by the middle of next year for the key product groups".

Numark intend to develop the A-Z Manual. Managing director Terry Norris says: "The guide will

never be finished, it must be kept up to date with new marketing initiatives." Numark also plan to announce measures where they will be able to offer advice on regional variations to the national statistics.

● Numark are also announcing the consultation area design for their retail concept. This consists of a screened area adjacent to the dispensary providing privacy for the customer while maintaining the accessibility of the pharmacist.

Smith & Nephew offer share rather than cash dividend

Against a background of flat sales in their interim results, Smith & Nephew plan to call an extraordinary general meeting to ask shareholders to accept ordinary shares instead of a cash dividend. The EGM is scheduled for September 11. The meeting will also be asked to vote for the cancellation of the share premium account and creating a special reserve against which goodwill on future acquisitions may be set off.

In his interim statement, Smith & Nephew chairman Eric Kinder said most of the company's businesses made good progress in line with the company's expectations. "In particular our wound healing, casting, bandaging and support and orthopaedic products did well in Europe and North America," he tells shareholders.

However, sales for the company are just 2 per cent higher than for the first half of 1990, at £364.2 million, though excluding the effects of business disposals and adverse exchange rate movements, say Smith & Nephew, the underlying growth in sales was some 9 per cent.

Profit before tax is lower than in the first six months of last year at £59.3m, but "shows an improving trend so far this year". Earnings per share are down at 4.02p against 4.36p, a fall attributed to an increase in tax charge.

The company's sun prep products have been hit by the relatively poor summer this year and the toiletries business has been hit by the depressed economy.

The company have announced an increased interim dividend of 17.5p, a 1 per cent increase.

Mixed interim results for Unilever

Difficulties including recession in some major markets, competitive pressures and the loss of duty free sales during the Gulf crisis have combined to depress results in Unilever's personal products operations. However, food and detergents grew in both volume and profitability while speciality chemicals showed resilience despite weak industrial markets.

These mixed six month figures resulted in overall sales up 3 per

cent to £11,359 million at constant rates of exchange, earning pre-tax profits of £840m, down 1 per cent.

Unilever chairman Sir Michael Angus said the majority of businesses had performed well during the half, often in the face of difficult trading conditions.

"Trading conditions during the rest of the year are expected to be similar to those that prevailed during the first six months," said Sir Michael.

Unichem capture eight more pharmacies for franchise scheme

Unichem have bought eight more pharmacies for their franchising scheme in a series of deals in July and August, bringing the total bought since March to 22. The company has spent some £2.15 million on shops from Dorset to Inverness in six separate deals.

The combined turnover of the eight shops is £3.75m, with the smallest, regarded by Unichem as having excellent potential, having a turnover of around £360,000. Typically the company is not buying

below £400,000.

Company chairman Peter Dodd said: "We have continued to use our cash resources selectively to acquire large shops at a time when few buyers have the available resources. We shall develop the shops by improved merchandising in order to obtain the benefits of the expected upturn in retail spending."

Unichem are still waiting for the decision of the Office of Fair Trading on the question of reference of their Macarthy bid to

the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Should the Unichem bid succeed finance director Jeff Harris sees some of the Savoury & Moore chain becoming part of the franchise scheme. "I think some of the Savoury & Moore shops would be better run under franchise than under management, while some would be better operating under our loan guarantee arrangement. It is a question of horses for courses," he told C&D.

Pretty Polly goes to Sara Lee for £110m

Pretty Polly, the hosiery business owned by BTR, has been sold to the Chicago-based Sara Lee Corporation for some £110 million. Sara Lee will also assume some £7.5m worth of associated debt. Pretty Polly will become part of the Personal Products Division of Sara Lee.

Pretty Polly, the undisputed hosiery brand leader in the UK and Ireland with some 80-plus per cent of the market, will continue to trade separately under its existing management. No changes in existing distribution arrangements are planned.

Sara Lee is said to be the leading manufacturer of hosiery in the USA.

Australia and continental Europe and the company already owns the Elbeo hosiery company. The ownership of both companies by Sara Lee "should enhance both companies opportunities," said a statement from Pretty Polly, as "Elbeo's strength is in the support market," while Pretty Polly has a better name in fashion hosiery.

John Kirkland, managing director of Pretty Polly, comments: "Everyone at Pretty Polly welcomes the tremendous opportunity presented by our integration into a major hosiery-focused organisation such as Sara Lee. It is business as usual with our customers and suppliers."

Nielsen service for grocers

Nielsen have launched a new service to monitor consumer sales in grocers. The Grocery Retail Index is compiled by collecting and collating scanning information from supermarket checkouts.

Colin Buckingham, Nielsen's marketing director explains: "Scanning data brings a new precision to marketing. They provide information at barcode level, enabling individual product lines to be identified and the impact of specific promotions, changes of pricing or advertising campaigns to be isolated and the effects identified."

Price Marking Order

The Price Marking Order comes into force on September 1. This requires that for goods sold at retail the price must refer either to a single item or a specified quantity of the goods, or in the case of bulk good a unit measurement or specified quantity. The indication of the selling price must be clearly legible and unambiguous.

The Order allows for a number of exceptions, including goods sold by number or bunch; an assortment of different items sold in a single pack and goods sold by vending machines.

Solid second half for Ares-Serono

The Ares-Serono group have reported a 17.8 per cent rise in worldwide sales for the first half of 1991 compared with the same period in 1990, when favourable currency fluctuations are excluded. The company achieved six month gross sales of some \$187.9 million compared with \$162m last year.

Ethical pharmaceutical sales for the company increased by some 19.3 per cent to \$300.6m, compared to just \$252m for the same period of 1990. However, after adjusting for currency effects the growth in sales falls to 16.4 per cent. Sales of the group's diagnostic products were some \$53.5m, up

from \$44.9m.

The increase in pharmaceutical sales was headed by Metrodin, Saizen and by the strong performance of the immunology/oncology product group, which registered a 35 per cent increase in sales. During the same period the company has increased R&D expenditure by 33 per cent.

For over the counter products the company achieved sales up from \$5.4m for the first half of 1990 to \$10.1m this year.

During this period Ares-Serono have introduced a new regional structure for their pharmaceutical division.

Coming Events

Pharmacy in China tour in Spring

Interchange, a company specialising in educational and cultural exchange programmes, is organising a pharmacy study tour to China (March 29-April 10).

The tour includes visits to hospital pharmacies, training institutes, an acupuncture clinic, communes, healthcare centres and a district pharmacy. Beijing, Xian, Shijiazhuang and Shanghai are on the itinerary with a stop-over in Hong Kong.

The cost of the 13-day trip, including air travel, accommodation, meals, visas, guides and excursions, is £1,535. The full programme is available from Interchange, 27 Stafford Road, Croydon CR0 4NG. Tel: 081-681 3512.

Advance information

Intergift. (Formerly the Regalo-Fuma International), gift trade fair including a perfumery sector, Madrid, **September 20-24**. Details from IFEMA on 071-637 9061.

The Healing Arts. Alternative medicine and complementary therapies exhibition, Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat St, London, **September 26-29**. Details from New Life Designs on 071-938 3788.

Chelsea Department of Pharmacy, King's College London. "Basic statistics for practice research", workshop, Chelsea Department of Pharmacy, **September 27**. Details from Russell Greene on 071-351 2488.

National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts. Joint conference with the Department of Health on "Health of the Nation", Kensington Town Hall, **September 30**. Details from Barbara Connah on 021-414 11381.

IBC Technical Services Ltd. "Biology of nitric oxide", London, **September 30-October 2**. Details from Georgina Mason on 071-236 4080.

Porosimetry standard

The British Standards Institute has finished work on a standard for the methods of evaluating porosity and pore size distribution. The standards, which relate to controlled drug release among other operations, will be published towards the end of the year.

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About people

Marathon man runs for epileptics

Martin Ellis, senior product manager for Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals Ltd in Uxbridge, takes his devotion to duty very seriously!

As well as being responsible for marketing of the epilepsy drug, Sabril, he ran in the London Marathon and raised over £1,300 for the British Epilepsy Association.

His company matched pound for pound all the cash he raised through personal sponsorship, and at the end of July he presented a cheque to the charity at its national offices in Leeds.

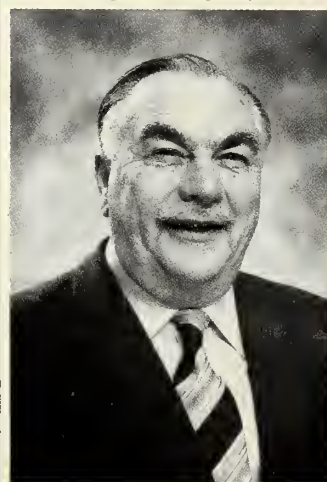


Martin (right) dons jogging suit to present BEA chief executive Terry O'Leary with a cheque for £1,337

A double for pharmacy

Mervyn Madge FRPharmS is the new chairman of the British Homoeopathic Association. At the same meeting J.B.L. Ainsworth MRPharmS, was appointed life president after many years service.

The Association was founded at the Stationers Hall in 1902, where the 90th anniversary is to be celebrated in 1992, and represents the public in matters concerning homoeopathy.



Mervyn Madge

Anyone for skiing?

The Young Pharmacist's Group are organising a skiing trip to Colorado next year and there are still a few spaces available.

The departure date is January 12 and there is the option of one, two or three weeks away. The cost of the first week, all inclusive, is £590. Anyone wanting to stay on pays an extra £65 but any additional skiing must be paid for on top.

Anyone interested in going along should contact Andrew Watson, YPG social secretary, on 0543 676302 as soon as possible.

Pharmacy video wins BMA award

A video about the pharmacist's role in health promotion has been awarded a Certificate of Educational Merit by the British Medical Association.

"Health promotion — how your pharmacist can help" was produced by Dr Terry Maguire, Nuffield Research Fellow at the School of Pharmacy, The Queen's University of Belfast.

"The film aims to show how pharmacists in the community can help in disease prevention and health promotion," said Dr

Maguire. "Six million visits a day are made to community pharmacies — many of them by people who are well and this presents an ideal opportunity to deliver health information and advice."

The award was presented by Dr Ian Field, secretary of the BMA to members of the Steering Committee of the Pharmacy Healthcare Scheme which financed production of the video.

Copies can be borrowed, free of charge, from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.



Mr Pattani of Heybridge, Essex (left), with pilot Alan Calder (right) was one of two pharmacists to win a flight in a hot air balloon after an Effico pharmacists display draw

APPOINTMENTS

Cow & Gate have made a number of personnel changes to help consolidate their position in the clinical and infant nutritional markets. **Niall Bowen** becomes marketing director for baby feeding and clinical nutrition products and services; **Phillip Powell** replaces **Tom Tempelman** as marketing manager for baby meals; Mr Tempelman will now focus on international developments. **Sandy Evans** has been appointed head of nutrition.

Ian Thomas is the new sales director, responsible for both the medical and retail sales forces and **Colin Bateman** becomes general sales manager, pharmacy, working with **Peter Starkie**, trade sector manager for pharmacies and grocery wholesale. The general sales manager, medical, is **Steve Chapman**, **Richard Shillito** is the trade sector manager for national accounts, multiple grocery and co-ops and **Derek Wood** continues as trade sector manager responsible for Boots and Superdrug.

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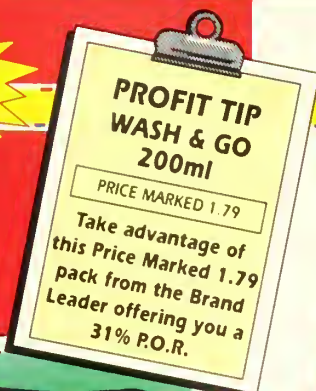
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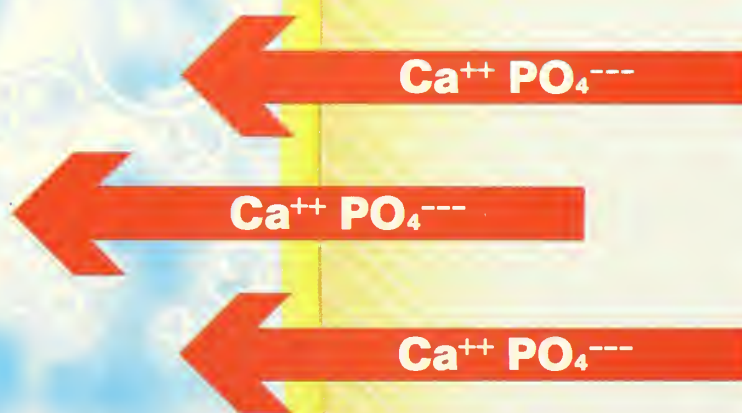
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Chewing stimulates saliva to aid remineralisation



Remineralisation – Net inflow of $\text{Ca}^{++} \text{PO}_4^{---}$ into the enamel



Demineralisation – Net outflow of $\text{Ca}^{++} \text{PO}_4^{---}$ from the enamel

After eating, elevated acid exposure can cause an outflow of calcium and phosphate from the tooth enamel, which may lead to demineralisation and decay. It is well documented that saliva has an important role to play in helping to prevent this process.^{1,2,3} A recently published study demonstrated that the chewing of sugar-free gum for 20 minutes after eating stimulates saliva to promote remineralisation of experimental caries-like lesions.⁴

Now a new research study using experimental caries-like lesions has shown that the chewing of sucrose-sweetened gum for 20 minutes after meals and snacks significantly increased the mineral content of the lesions, compared to when gum was not chewed.⁵

While research on sucrose-sweetened gum continues, you can recommend with confidence the chewing of sugar-free gum for 20 minutes after eating to help your patients in the fight against tooth decay.

So consider Wrigley's Extra and Orbit sugar-free gums as valuable adjuncts to thorough brushing with fluoride toothpaste, a sensible diet and regular check-ups in maintaining good dental health.



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